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NEW HOPEWELL BAPTIST CHURCH,
R.F.D., PIEDMONT, ALA.

Alabama Genealogical Society

Publications

Number 17

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THE NEW HOPEWELL BAPTIST CHURCH
Calhoun County (formerly Benton County) Alabama
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Published by the Alabama Genealogical Society, Inc.
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President

1962
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NEW HOPEWELL BAPTIST CHURCH

R.F.D., Piedmont, Ala.

Organized August 14, 1832

*****

Notes from the First Church Book

Compiled and Edited by
Mrs. Frank Ross Stewart, Troy, Ala.

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New Hopewell Baptist Church was organized August 14, 1832, by Rev. Basel Roden. It was located when organized in Benton (now Calhoun) County, Alabama, near Cross Plains, later renamed Piedmont. By a change in County boundary lines, the New Hopewell Church in 1841 was within Cherokee County, Alabama. In 1875 a new church building was erected at the present location, which is within Calhoun County.

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NEW HOPEWELL BAPTIST CHURCH
Calhoun County
ALABAMA

Organized
1832

New Hopewell Baptist Church, located in Calhoun County, Alabama, eight miles west of Piedmont, is the oldest church in the county. It has the added distinction of being the first Baptist Church organized in Cherokee County, Ala. When it was founded on August 14, 1832, the lands on which it was built were within the bounds of Benton, now Calhoun County. By a change of boundary lines between Benton and Cherokee Counties, it was renoved to Cherokee County, and remained in Cherokee until 1875, when the congregation decided to move the church building to its present location.

It is not known when the first little group of Baptists "on Terrapin Creek" met to worship, but on August 14, 1832, "a few members of the Baptist Church on Terrapin Creek", calling themselves "the United Baptist Church of Christ", called on Rev. Basel Roden and W.F. Morrison to "examine" them, and "when examined the brethern believing us to be qualified set us apart by solemn prayer as the United Baptist Church known by the name of New Hopewell." (Photostat of the First Church Book available from Mrs. Frank Ross Stewart, Troy, Ala.)

Rev. Roden, on August 14, 1832, examined William Morrison and ordained him to the ministry, on presentation by the congregation.

The Presbytery, Revs. Roden and Morrison, found the church to be "in possession of the orthodox principles of faith" and "set them apart" with solemn prayer and pronounced then as a church consisting of six members.

The charter members were:

Edmond Berry
William Caloway
Margaret Berry
Rebeckah Caloway
William Smith
Elizabeth Smith

The membership of the church increased rapidly. A list of church members for 1834 included the following:

Edmond Berry
William Caloway
Margaret Berry
Rebeckah Caloway
William Smith
Elizabeth Smith
Lemuel Pain
Nancy Pain
Enoch Pain
Enoch Benson
Jessa Conner
Bethany Conner

John B. Lansford
Sophronia Lansford
Nancy Sparks
Sarah Ledbetter
William Harbin
Anna Wester
Matilda Kennon
John Kennedy
Dinah Kennedy
Sarah Morgan
Elizabeth Rainwater
Polly Hester

Jemina Mor
William Boland
Mary Boland
Elizabeth Bale
Isabella Bolen
Anna Bale (Hall)
Nancy White
James Masters
Micajah Webb
Harriet Webb
Martha Webb
Pheba Bale

Hiram Bennit
Dasha Bennit
Philup Oneale
Lenna Oneale
Harry (man of color)
Malinda
Cooper B. Teate
Nancy Teate
Joel Casey
Mary Casey
Elizabeth Willson
Mark Manin (Noted: dead)
Willian S. Acker
Elizabeth Acker
John Willson
Daniel Cothran

Nancy Wilson
Wm. M. Wilson
Mary Coggin
John Manin
Senth Harbin
James Lewis
Jane Rainwater
Elizabeth Coggins
Nancy Cothran
Thomas White
Willian Hughes
Lida Hughes

The Minutes (1834) of the Church record the following interesting items of business:

February 22 — Bro Berry, moderator. Committee to attend on org. of Choccolocco.
March 1 ——— "We the committee from the New Hopewell Church met on Chockolocko and after the following brethern, to wit, Joel Bordin, Jacob Pierce, Eleous Howell, Polly Howel, Abigil Porter, Elizabeth Morrison, being examined giv them up to a Constitution at that place." Signed: Silas Witt, moderator, J.B. Lansford, Clk.
March 22 ——— Bro. Witt, elected Moderator. Received: Nancy White, James Masters, Rebeckah Masters, Micajah Webb, Harriett Webb, Martha Webb, and a black girl, Malinda, property of said Webb, Pheba Bail, Hiram Benit, Dasha Benit, "a decon and deconis and we receive them as such for us."
"Whereas the church has been without a pastor for sometime the church resolved to meet on Friday the 28th to choose one." Letter of dismission granted Bro. Morrison.
March 28 ——— E. Berry, moderator. Elected Bro Witt, pastor.

April 26 ——— Rec'd following by letter:
Thomas Hall
Lucinda Hall
Ambros Vandiver
Redic Manin
Sarah Manin
May 22 ——— Rec'd Bro William Poter, but he was granted a letter of dismissal at same conference.
June 21 ——— Rec'd Philup Oneal and wife, Linnia Oneale.
Rec'd a petition from Salem praying this church "to come and examine their constitution on the satterday before the second Sunday in July which was granted." Committee: John B. Lansford, Benit, Berry, Pain, and Harben.

July 26 ——— Rec'd Bro Cooper B. Tate and his wife Nancy Tate.

July 26 (cont,)- Rec'd Bro Joel Casey and wife Mary Casey and Sister [illegible]. Appointed delegates to Association as follows: [illegible] Berry, J.B. Lansford, Micajah Webb, Hiram Benit. (Mt. Zion Asso.)

August 22 ——— Rec'd William S. Acker and his wife Elizabeth Acker. It was moved and seconded that this church apply for letter of dismissi from the Association or that "it ly in the Breast of the delegates to act as they see fit in that." Subscribed to the Minutes to the Association, $1.52½. Subscribers were:

Webb	10¢
Acker	10¢
Hall	10¢
Tate	10¢
Benson	10¢
Oneal	10¢
Conner	10¢
Berry	10¢
Easy	10¢
Minton	12½¢
Smith	10¢
Lansford	10¢
Eliot	10¢

Church Letter to the Association: New Hopewell was a Charter Church of the Tallasahatchee Association.

Baptized 0
Recd by letter 33
Dismissed by letter 13
Dead 0
Restored and excommunicated 1
Total 52

Sept. 27 -------Bro. Webb, moderator. The delegates to the Mt. Zion Asso. thinking proper to apply for a letter of dismission did so and it was granted.

Nov. 22 ———Appointed delegates to the Convention. Berry, Webb, Lansford, Benit. The Tallasahatchee Association was organized at Walnut Spring Church near Jacksonville, Ala., 1834.

Dec. 27 ——— Application for letter of dismissal by Bro. Webb, wife, and daughter and colored girl Malinda.

Dec. 28 ———Letters of dismission granted to Hiram Benit and wife, Dasha Benit, Philup Oneale and Linna Oneale.

Members received during 1835: *

Polly Hester
Jemina Mor
Anna Hall
Nancy White
James Masters
Rebeckah Masters
Pheba Bale
Harry
John White
Elizabeth Berry
Sarah Berry
Priscilla Vandiver
Elizabeth Vandiver
John Cothran
Sarah Rainwater
Thomas Eliot
Elensey Eliot
John E. Harris
Sabrina Harris
Poly White
Elizabeth Caloway
Joshua Miliner
G.W. White
Elizabeth Cox
William Finley
Mary Scogin
Temperance William
Mike Finley
Custis Tapp
Carolina Palmer
Ailsa White
Willis
Redrec Manin
Sarah Manin
Isaac Teague
Mary Teague
Jehu Cater
Mary Cater
Jos M. Reaves
Mary Reaves
Parthena Alsup

Caleb Pitts
Hanah Pitts
Poles Finley
Hariot Louis
Zachariah Cox
Thomas Hall
Lucinda Hall
_____Covington
Charlotte Graham
John Graham
Harriot Graham
Nancy Graham
George
Vina
Irea H. Prince
_____Prince
Assenith Graham
Sala Baker
Ambros Vandiver

Note: 1840 Census of Benton County, Ala. contains some of these names. The 1850 Census of Cherokee County, Ala. and of Benton County, Ala. contain some of these names. Marriage records before 1850 are filed sometimes in Benton (now Calhoun) County or in St. Clair County, Ala.

County seat of Calhoun County is Anniston, Ala.

County seat of St. Clair County is Ashville, Ala.

The compiler has the 1850 Census of Cherokee County, county seat, Centre, Ala. No record before 1870 are found in Courthouse at Centre.

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*For further information in regard to this list please write: Mrs. Frank Stewart, Troy, Ala., enclosing stamped envelop for reply. No charge will be made unless photostat is desired.

On March 21, 1835 the committee sent to assist in the Constitution in the neighborhood of Bro Webb made its report. Charter members of the constituted church were:*

Micajah Webb
Hariot Webb
Martha Webb
Black girl Malinda
Sanford
Vandaver and wife
William Acker
Elizabeth Acker

On May 23, 1835 it was resolved to "send petitions to the different ministers within reach to attend the association at this place." **

On June 26, 1835 Bro. Witt, Minton (Silvanus Minton), and Louis (James Lewis) were called as a Presbytery to ordain Joel Casy as Deacon.
A committee was appointed to "select the place for the stand*** at the Association.

On July 25, 1835 notion was made to send $2.50 to Association for Minutes. "More if necessary." The church received a petition from Cedar Valley requesting ministerial aid in a Constitution. ****

On August 22, 1835 the Letter to the Association was read by J.B. Lansford Clerk of the church. It was as follows:

"Dismisted by leter 21
Recd by Exsperance 5
Excommunicated 1
Recd by leter 4
Dead 1
Total number 41

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*This church is thought to be the present Liberty Baptist Church at Spring Garden, Alabama.

**New Hopewell was host to the Tallasahatchie Association in 1835, its second meeting

*** The Association convened under a brush arbor. This expression refers to the pulpit, and general arrangement of the arbor.

****It is thought that this church was located at what was known later as Baker, a community located three mibes north of Rock Runn, Ala. The church was called Pilgrim's Rest and was moved in 1960 to Piedmont, Ala.

Sept. 20-21-23-24, 1835 - Second Annual Meeting of the Tallasahatchie * Association was held at New Hopewell. "The association being convened at New Hopewell and a dore opened for the reception of members and the following one received by exsperiance:"

John White
Elizabeth Berry
Sarah Berry
_____Vandiver
_____Vandiver
John Cothran
Sarah Rainwater
Thomas Eliot
_____Eliot
John E. Harrie
Sabrina Harris
Poly White
Elizabeth Caloway
Miliner
Washington White
Elizabeth Fox
William Finley
Mary Scoggins
Temperance Williams
Mrs. Finley
Curtis Tapp

Sep. 26, 1835 ---Moved that "the church hold out a subscription to our friends and neighbors for the benefit of our beloved Bro. Silas Witt." A "committy apptd to exan in the case of our colored brother Harry in regard to and concerning a public gift". **

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*Tallasahatchie Association was composed of churches in Calhoun (Benton) County, Cherokee County, what later was Cleburne County, west Georgia counties formed from last Cherokee Indian lands. Some of these churches had belonged earlier to Mt. Zion Association.

**The public gift concerned preaching, singing, and praying within the church. Report of the committee was postponed. Harry came forward on June 24, 1837 with a desire that the church would grant him the liberty of exercising in public which was "laid over to the next meeting to consult the mind of his master. Bro. Lewis appointed to doe it." On July 22, 1837, Bro. Lewis reported his master had given his consent for the church to grant him that power under the proper instruction of the church and then it was motioned and second that the case of Brother Harry be laid over till our next meeting." Case laid over until Jan. 27, 1838 when it was moved and second that "he be liberated to pray, sing, and exhort in the bounds of the church."

The Church Book covers the period 1832 to 1847.

The Graham Family joined the church on April 23, 1836 -- John, Charlotte, as a Deacon and Deaconess and Harriett and Nancy. Asenath Graham joined a week later.*

The Church Letter to the Association, approved August 27, 1836 was:

Received by Exsperance	27
Reed by letter	17
Dismist	7
Excluded	1
Dead	1
Total	81

Clerks who served the church from 1832 to 1847:

Moses W. Benson 1832
John B. Lansford 1834
Joel Casy apponted Dec. 24, 1836
Enoch Benson, John Graham assistant March 25, 1837
John Graham, John Boatman assistant Feb. 1, 1840
Richard H. Thackerson March 26, 1842
Enoch Benson 1843
R.H. Thackerson 1845
John F. Geer, Isaac Williams assistant March, 1846
John Morgan, J.F. Geer assistant Dec. 1846

Bro. Silas Witt served the church as pastor from March 28, 1834 to March 26, 1842. Bro. S. Minton was chosen in 1842 but declined. Bro. Witt was elected on Dec. 10, 1842 and was serving on Nov. 22, 1847, last entry in the book.**

On May 26, 1838 a petition was presented from "brethern living on the head of Nances Creek desiring this church to send them ministerial help which was granted and brethern appointed as follows: Brother Berry, Holcombe, Graham, and Benson. Holcombe had joined the church March 25, 1837 with his wife Sarah Holcomb and Susan Holcombe.***

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*Isaac Calaway married Asenath Graham 18 May 1839.

**Raymond Harrison Bostick, 900 Ivy Lane, San Antonio, Tex., writes: "Silas Witt came to Texas in 1870....Silas Witt and wife, Susannah Randolph, are buried in Old Perry Cemetery at Moody, Texas." Mr. Bostick has other information in regard to marriages of Silas Witt's children.

***Striplin-Holcombe-Oliver-Stewart Families are related. Families came from Morgan and Newton Counties in Georgia to Cherokee County, Alabama in 1830. Census and land records available from Mrs. Frank R. Stewart, Troy, Ala. free on request. Please enclose stamped envelope.

The Temperance question came up in the church on August 24, 1839. Bro. Hall was charged "with keeping a disorderly grocery house, " and his case taken up and laid over to the next meeting, and Bro. B. Holcombe and R. Thackerson appointed to cite him to the next meeting. In September Brother Thomas Hall was discharged. A query was adopted for decision at our next meeting. "Is it right to keep a grocery house to sell spiritous liquor?" "Is it consisten with the word of God or is it inconsistent with the word of God?" On Oct. 26, 1839 the query was laid over to the next meeting.

It was not until January, 1840, that the query was taken up and put to the church whether it should be answered in the church or not and the church agreed to answer it. "The church decided that they believe it is not right for a member of their body to keep a Grocery and retail ardent spirits." In February the church appointed R. Thackerson to go to see Hall and "labor with him in the case of keeping a grocery and retailing ardent spirits and to ask him to come to the church at our next conference." He failed to come and was excluded from the church.

It is not known exactly where the original church building was located. In January, 1841, a committee composed of William Calloway, Benjamin Holcombe, J. Grahan, was asked to select a suitable place to build New Hopewell Church. On February 27 they reported that "near Lihue Robenson's on the east side of Tarpen Creek is a suitable place in their opinion to build a church." Removal of the church was postponed in March and again in April. In May, 1841, the church took up the matter of moving the meeting house and agreed to move it "on the stage road near the Todd's field". The same committee was asked to select the exact place.

The church began to have troubles so dire that the members agreed to petition "three sister churches, Bethelem, Salem, and Mt. Pleasant, to attend and if thought proper by them to dissolve the church." This petition was signed January 22, 1842. Messengers came on Feb. 26, 1842. They were:

From Salem:
Sylvanus Minton*
Hiram White

From Mt. Pleasant:
James Thorington

From Cedartown (Ga.):
Silas Witt

After enquiring "into the state of the church they found them in order and able to keep house for God and on a due Meditation and reflection the brethern and sisters agreed to continue together in a church state."

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*Bro. Sylvanus Minton has many descendants in Calhoun County, Ala. and in Texas and Oklahoma. Dr. Frank Minton, Piedmont, Ala. has picture and Bible. Dr. H.L. Minton, Conway, Ark. is a descendant.

The next few months saw the members meeting in the homes. On July 23, 1842 they "resolved to hold next conference at or near John Morgan's Spring on * Saturday." In August they met a Richard Bole's.** Brother William Taylor led in prayer and was elected Moderator.***

The church began to prosper. Willis Geer**** was elected deacon. Providence Church sent a messenger asking assistance in ordination of two deacons. Liberty Church asked assistance in ordaining Brother W.N. Chandler to the ministry. Bro. Boles was chosen a deacon in March, 1846.

On January 28, 1844, Pisgah***** an arm of Union (located in Gnatville) sent a request for deacons to examine it to the propriety of their coming into a Constitution.

In July, 1846, the church appointed Bro. Taylor, Geer, Boles, Pike, and Morgan "to look out a place for a harbour and say what kind shall be built," and appointed Brethern Taylor and Geer to go "to the Union meeting at Rabbit Town****** as correspondents.

It was recommended by the last association (Tallasahatchee Association 1845) that the church answer definitely whether "we are willing for our association to attach itself to the Baptist State Convention of our State, and it was moved and seconded and carried that we remain as we are and have been."

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*Near Vigo, Calhoun County, east of Piedmont. Mrs. James R. Curtis, 2118 E. Marshall, Longview, Tex. is interested in Morgan Line. Also Mrs. C.L. McLaughlin, 108 W. Fifth St., Grant City, Mo. Mrs. W.S. Terry, Jefferson, Texas, is descended from Morgan-Boles Families. Also Mrs. L.L. Lancaster, Auburn, Ala. and Mrs. Thomas W. Coleman, Anniston, Ala.

**John Boles of novie fame was descended from R. Boles.

***Buried at Lively Cemetery, three miles north of Piedmont. His daughter Jane married Uncle Jackie Stewart, son of John and Sarah (Striplin) Stewart. R.H. Bostick, 900 Ivy Lane, San Antonio, Tex. writes:"John Witt married Elizabeth Taylor. His brother, Isaac, married Sallie Taylor, her sister, about the same time.

****Judge Robert Russell Savage (183101899) married Louisa J. Geer, daughter of Willis and Cynthia (Hall) Geer. His descendant live in Centre, Ala. and in other cities in the state. See CHEROKEE COUNTY HISTORY, Vol. II, Stewart.

*****First Church Book of Pisgah Church is available. See AGS Publication No. 16.

Members of New Hopewell Church --July 1843

William Taylor, ordained minister
Philip Gee, ordained minister
Willis Geer, deacon
R.H. Thackerson, deacon
Peter Thackerson
William W. Thackerson
Henry Roads
Thomas White dead
Oren Miller excluded
Moses Elliott dead
Isaac Williams
Anderson Taylor
Caroline Palmer dismissed
Martha Palmer dismissed
Mary Covington dead
Vina Cobler
Martha Noland
Katherine Seippens
Lucinda Thackerson
Dicy Scroggins
Nancy Boles
Charlotte Williams
Sarah Thackerson excluded
Sarah Rhoads
Margaret Morgan
Cynthia Nabors
Mary Roads
Elizabeth Taylor
Nancy White
Cynthia Green
Hulda Gee
Nancy B. Taylor
Mary Taylor
Zania Duggar
Received Sept. 1844:
Mary Redmon
Nancy Combs
Wm. Neely
Solomon Gee
Amanda Neal
Jemima Harris
Jane Stewart
(Note: Meeting lasted nine days.
Baptism by H. Clover.)

Received October 1844:
Richard R. Boles
Wm. Shearer
John Pike
Rachel Pike, wife
John Morgan
Joshua Atchley
Received Sept. 1845:
David Geer
Albert S. Acker
Sam belonging to Dr. Acker
John S. Thackerson
Eliza R. Thackerson, wife
John Geer
Rebecca Noland, Sr.
Rebecca Noland, Jr.
Colored sister Mary
belonging to Bro. Willis Geer
Nancy Noris
Sparks Nealy
John Cadenhead
Mary Cadenhead, wife
Sarah Cadenhead, daughter
Thomas Cadenhead
Caroline Cadenhead, wife
Moses Abels
John Williams
Sarah Williams, wife
Nancy Emaline Williams
John Rountree
Delphia Camron
Recd October 1844:
John W. Ledbetter
William Morgan dis. 1846
Susan Morgan wife ditto
Mary Allsup
Sarah belonging to A. Stewart
Willis Morgan
Joseph Noland

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